

CIA and Faculty Members Silent on Thong Statements

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Both the CIA and critics of the US administration's policy in Vietnam have refused to comment on a statement by Huynh Sanh Thong which charges certain members of the CIA with intense manipulation of the South Vietnamese political situation.

The statement, which appeared in full in yesterday's edition of the NEWS, alleges that Deputy Ambassador William Porter and Senior Liaison Officer Edward Lansdale have lobbied for a negotiation position "ever closer to Communists in a frenzied search for peace before the next American elections."

Harry J. Benda, associate professor of history and co-chairman of the council on Southeast Asian studies, expressed doubts about the validity of the charges made by Mr. Thong.

In an interview late last night, Mr. Benda said that "while I claim no inside knowledge of the situation, I find it very hard to know, on the basis of provable factual data, whether Mr. Thong is correct in his very far reaching accusations."

"I am not among Mr. Lansdale's admirers," Mr. Benda said, "but as far as I know, he is not, nor never has been, out to compromise with the Communists."

"I think from what I know that Mr. Lansdale's end is not a rapprochement with the Communists, but the very opposite," said Mr. Benda.

Yale Chaplain William S. Coffin Jr., Robert Cook, assistant professor of sociology, and Staughton Lynd, assistant professor of history, all refused to comment.

The statement further charges that



HARRY J. BENDA
Doubts Validity of Charges

American news publications such as Newsweek, Foreign Affairs and the Christian Science Monitor, and a member of professional political scientists, have propagandized in favor of a quick settlement to the war at the expense of Vietnamese Nationalism.

A large portion of Mr. Thong's statement was sent out over the national wires of the Associated Press. Reaction from the CIA and other sources in Washington is expected within the next few days.

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